A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE SASKATCHEWAN

A STRATEGY TO GET SASKATCHEWAN PEOPLE IN MOTION!

AUGUST 2001

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FORWARD

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to enhancing the lives of all Saskatchewan people by leading us towards A Physically Active Saskatchewan.

Early in the year 2000, a committee representative of the major stakeholders in fitness and recreation throughout Saskatchewan was drawn together by the departments' Sport & Recreation Unit. This committee was charged with the responsibility of preparing a strategy to address the significantly high levels of physical inactivity. The impetus behind this action was the 1997 Clear Lake Accord agreed to by all ministers responsible for fitness and recreation throughout Canada to decrease physical inactivity by 10% by the year 2003. Under the guidance of Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation (formerly Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing), the three global organizations of Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, SaskCulture and Sask Sport Inc. and the provincial government departments of Saskatchewan Health and Saskatchewan Education have now completed a strategy titled ***"A Physically Active Saskatchewan! A Strategy To Get Saskatchewan People In Motion".***

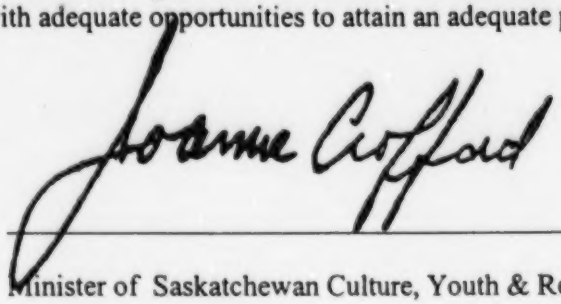
This strategy represents the beginning for attaining this lofty target! The main component of the strategy is the Saskatchewan Action Plan. Three broad-based goals will direct the efforts within our province towards:

- promoting community relevant approaches;
- implementing innovative program strategies through traditional and non-traditional partners; and
- elevating the importance of physical activity on public agendas.

Saskatchewan Culture, Youth & Recreation is committed to providing the leadership necessary to move this strategy forward. A positive impact on our schools, homes, workplaces and health institutions and general public will result from the concerted efforts of all stakeholders in striving towards ***"A Physically Active Saskatchewan".*** Given the enormity of the 10% physical inactivity reduction target and realizing much more time is required to effect lifestyle changes among Saskatchewan people, we view Saskatchewans' Centennial year of 2005 as a more realistic target date. Let us evaluate and celebrate our progress in getting Saskathewan people in motion and leading healthy active lifestyles by 2005!

As the minister responsible for sport and recreation, I am supportive of this strategy. Through the cooperative efforts of our three global organizations, the three above mentioned government departments and the active involvement and input from various provincial and community based organizations, the strategy to reduce physical inactivity is now in place. Thankyou to the following provincial and community based organizations for your valuable contributions to the development of this strategy paper: Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Regina Health District, Saskatoon District Health, Health Canada, Saskatchewan Physical Education Association, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Seniors Fitness Association, Active Living Coalition of Older Adults, Heart & Stroke Foundation, Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability and Coalition for Active Living. We look forward to collectively addressing the physical inactivity reduction target with our multi-government and sport, recreation and cultural partners. It is

through the individual and collective actions of organizations such as these that will ensure Saskatchewan people are provided with adequate opportunities to attain an adequate physically active lifestyle.



Minister of Saskatchewan Culture, Youth & Recreation

Executive Summary

There is conclusive evidence that physical activity is important through all stages of life. A physically active lifestyle helps prevent disease and chronic conditions, boosts the positive effects of rehabilitation, reduces the potential for injuries and manages other risk factors.

In addition to physiological benefits, physical activity improves concentration, relationship development, social integration and quality of life. Personal benefits, such as enhanced self-esteem, often result from a physically active lifestyle.

Partners must work together towards common goals and objectives to reduce physical inactivity. This will require co-ordination, integration and an array of strategies. The federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to reduce physical inactivity and are engaged in a range of activities in this area. On August 8, 1997 the Clear Lake Accord was signed; the Ministers responsible for fitness, active living, recreation and sport set a joint target **to reduce physical inactivity among Canadians by 10% by the year 2003.**

This document, ***"A Physically Active Saskatchewan! – A Strategy to get Saskatchewan People in Motion"***, outlines a vision for this province and provides a framework for action. The three strategic goals emphasize:

- **promoting physical activity through an active living and community relevant approach;**
- **establishing and implementing innovative program strategies by working with traditional and non-traditional partners with an interest in physical activity; and**
- **elevating the importance of physical activity on public agendas.**

These strategic goals provide the basis for planning, implementing and evaluating a collaborative Action Plan comprised of numerous objectives. Community groups, provincial organizations, and all levels of government across the province should develop plans of action guided by this framework.

This framework recognizes and supports the community as the basic agent for identifying its own physical activity needs. Community members must be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of local initiatives. Active community involvement is critical for the success of any program.

Background

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for fitness, active living, recreation and sport signed an historic agreement, The Clear Lake Accord, in Manitoba on August 8, 1997. In recognition of the ongoing concern – that physical inactivity represents a major health risk - the Ministers set a joint target **to reduce physical inactivity among Canadians by 10% by the year 2003**.

Ministers also agreed to organize budget resources and initiatives within their respective jurisdictions to support this target. Ministers agreed to establish, sustain and enhance formal connections between the recreation and physical activity systems and other related sectors to support strategic and cost effective initiatives in addressing physical inactivity as a serious health and social issue.

Saskatchewan government departments, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan and numerous sport, recreation, health, education and seniors organizations have taken action to establish ***A Physically Active Saskatchewan! – A Strategy to get Saskatchewan People in Motion***. This plan of action provides a collective direction for current and future initiatives aimed at encouraging and supporting physical activity. The strategy serves as a tool for planning change and a guide for all who want to promote physical activity.

This strategy provides municipal and provincial government policy-makers, service providers, and program designers with a framework for encouraging Saskatchewan people to be more physically active. It includes a provincial vision and goal with strategic directions that identify the necessary actions to ensure physical activity is a part of everyone's life.

The 10% physical inactivity reduction target by 2003 is a lofty goal indeed! As long as the leadership of government and the initiatives of the sport, recreation, health and education sectors remain constant, a physically active Saskatchewan can be achieved. All involved agree it will require a significant amount of time to chart a course; develop the necessary partnerships; plan and implement programs and activities; inform the public; and monitor progress.

This physical activity vision for Saskatchewan must extend well beyond the year 2003.

With this long-term commitment in mind, Saskatchewan's 100th Anniversary in 2005 can provide motivation and encouragement for made-in-Saskatchewan initiatives. As communities and organizations mobilize their efforts, they should keep in mind the opportunity to celebrate Saskatchewan's anniversary in a physically active way!

Importance of Physical Activity

✓ What follows is a brief scan of opinions and observations concerning the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

✓ There is conclusive evidence that physical activity is important through all stages of life. An active lifestyle can help prevent disease and chronic conditions, boost the positive effects of rehabilitation, reduce the potential for injuries and help manage other risk factors. Some of the benefits of regular physical activity include:

- Improved fitness and quality of life;
- Better physical and mental health;
- More energy and reduced stress;
- Stronger muscles and bones;
- Better posture and balance; and
- Prolonged independent living in later life.

(Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, Health Canada, 1999)

✓ The benefits of physical activity are far greater than simply physiological. Other benefits include improved concentration, enjoyment, relationship development, and social integration. Spiritual benefits, such as the feeling of inner peace, often result from being physically active. Active living also provides economic benefits related to reducing health-care costs, including medical care, geriatric care, and the cost of injuries.

(The National Active Living Community, 1997)

✓ We must get serious about improving the health of the nation by affirming our commitment to healthy physical activity on all levels: personal, family, community, organizational, and national. Because physical activity is so directly related to preventing disease and premature death and to maintaining a high quality of life, we must accord it the same level of attention that we give other important public health practices that affect the entire nation. Physical activity thus joins the front ranks of essential health objectives, such as nutrition, the use of seat belts, and the prevention of adverse health effects of tobacco.

(Physical Activity and Health-A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996)

✓ Widespread evidence indicates that regular physical activity has both physical and mental health benefits, including the prevention of heart disease and depression. Heart disease is a leading cause of death, disability and illness, and one of the major costs of health care in Canada. Depression is a common psychiatric disorder, and another major cause of hospitalization and disability.

(Health Reports, Summer 1999, Vol. ll, No. 1)

✓ Physical activity is an important strategy in promoting emotional well being. Research has shown that regular physical activity helps to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression and to positively influence psychological well-being.

(Canada Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1997)

✓ In 1993, the Heart and Stroke Foundation in Canada and the United States, identified physical inactivity as the fourth modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease after smoking, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

(Alberta Community Development, 1995)

✓ Any increase in bone mass that occurs as a result of exercise is considered an important benefit for both the individual and society. For example, if osteoporotic fractures in the population can be delayed by just a few years, this will result in fewer years of dependency and associated substantial reductions in health care costs overall, as well as, an increase in the quality of life for older citizens.

(Drinkwater, 1994)

✓ Physically fit people repeatedly have been found to have less anxiety, somatic complaints and nervous tension than unfit people.

(Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute, 1995)

✓ The U.S. Surgeon General's Report (1996) which was developed collaboratively with at least 11 different National Health Institutes (Heart, Lung, Blood, Diabetes, Arthritis, etc.) involved extensive scientific research/review and came up with these conclusions:

- Regular physical activity or cardiorespiratory fitness decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in general and of coronary heart disease in particular.
- Regular physical activity is associated with a decreased risk of colon cancer.

Studies show that the beneficial effects of training on the health of a child with diabetes mellitus was a decreased need for insulin with increased diabetic control.

(Bar-Or, 1990)

✓ ***The Benefits Catalogue*** produced by the Canadian Parks / Recreation Association identifies several benefits of leading a life that involves physical recreation, active living and sports. These benefits include:

- Physical recreation and active living are essential to **Personal Health** and are a key determinant of health status.
- Recreation is a key to balanced **Human Development** helping Canadians reach for their potential.
- Recreation and parks are essential to **Quality of Life**.
- Recreation reduces self-destructive and **Anti-Social Behaviour**.
- Recreation and Parks build **Strong Families and Healthy Communities**
- **Pay Now or Pay More Later!** Recreation reduces health care, social service and police/justice costs.

(The Benefits Catalogue – Canadian Parks/Recreation Association, 1997)

✓ Physical inactivity is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Regular physical activity can reduce body weight, improve serum lipids and cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes, thereby overall cardiovascular risk. National guidelines recommend the development of an active lifestyle that includes 60 minutes of light physical activity every day, or 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day.

Physically active children have higher high-density lipoprotein (HDI) levels, and lower blood pressure, body mass index (BMI) and triglyceride levels. These factors are associated with a reduced risk of heart disease and stroke. Those who are physically active in childhood are more likely to be active in adolescence and adulthood.

(Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, 1999)

✓ Research shows that during the teenage years, adolescent women experience a rapid decline in physical activity and sports participation and a corresponding reduction in levels of overall fitness.

(Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan, 2000)

✓ According to the 1988 Campbell Fitness Survey, a higher proportion of boys (72%) compared to girls (49%) aged 10-14 years were physically active (expending 3 or more kilocalories per kilogram of body weight per day). Among adolescents aged 15-19 years, the proportion of boys who were physically active was similar to the younger children (69%), but a lower proportion of girls (39%) were physically active.

A 1999 survey in Quebec found that 63% of boys and 39% of girls aged 15-19 engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activity three times per week for at least 20 minutes.

In the 1995 Canadian Physical Activity Monitor Survey (PAMS), parents reported that:

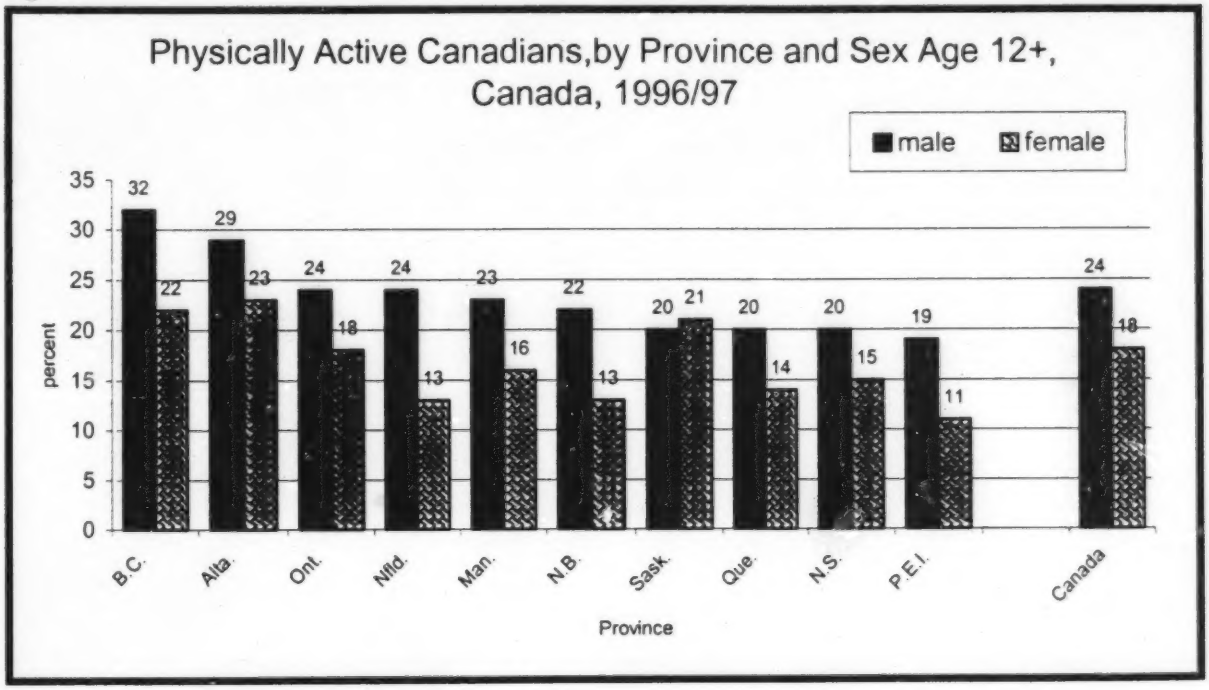
- their children aged from 1 to 4 spend 22 hours each week in physically active play;
- pre-school boys spend nearly four more hours per week in physically active play than pre-school girls;
- boys and girls aged 5-12 years were physically active about 14 hours per week, including time spent in physical education classes and activities outside the school;
- by adolescence, boys were again more active than girls, spending about 5 more hours per week than girls being physically active; and
- boys and girls aged 13-17 spend 16 and 11 hours per week, respectively, being physically active.

(Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, 1999)

The Saskatchewan Picture – How physically active are we?

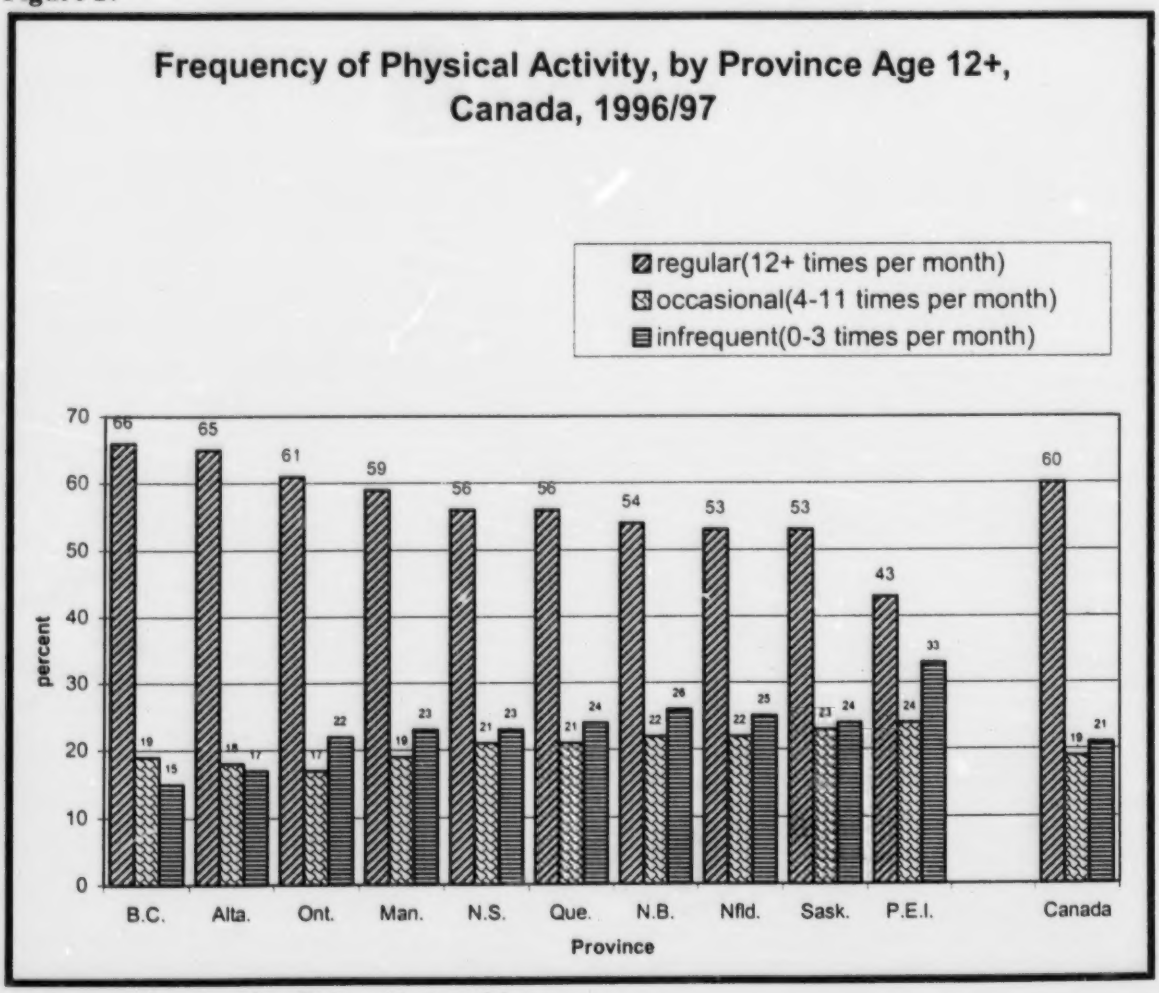
The National Population Health Survey Highlights indicate that in 1996/97, 21% of females and 20% of males in Saskatchewan ages 12 and over were classified as sufficiently physically active during their leisure time to achieve optimal health benefits. This compares with the Canadian average of 18% of females and 24% of males. The percentage of active men in all provinces and territories was consistently higher than that of active women, except in Saskatchewan. (Figure 1)

Figure 1:



Although only 21% of Canadians were classified as active, 60% (14,229,000) reported that they regularly participated in leisure-time physical activity. Fifty-three percent (53%) of Saskatchewan residents reported they regularly participated in leisure-time physical activity as compared to the national average of 60%. (Figure 2).

Figure 2:

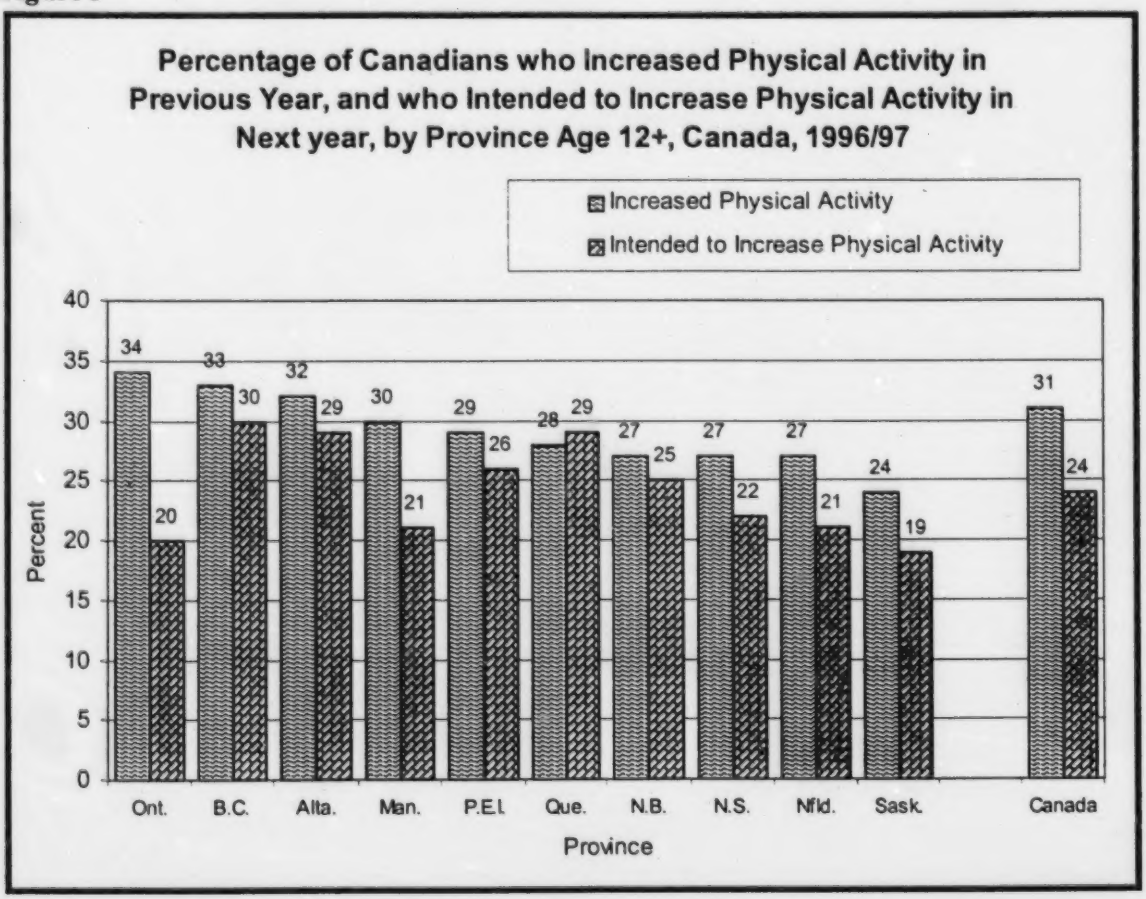


Terminology used in Figures 1, 2 and 3 ...

Leisure-Time Physical Activity – physical activity not related to work (e.g. gardening, swimming, home exercises).
Non-Leisure Physical Activity – includes physical activity at work, commuting to/from work or school, and/or while doing daily chores around the house. (Statistics Canada).

Twenty-four percent (24%) of Saskatchewan residents ages 12 and over increased their physical activity in the last year as compared to the national average of 31%; 21% of Saskatchewan residents indicated that they intended to increase their physical activity compared to 24% of Canadians. (Figure 3)

Figure 3



The Saskatchewan Action Plan

Vision

A provincial strategy for Saskatchewan was developed through an intersectoral approach. Participants agreed to support **the provincial/territorial target of reducing physical inactivity by 10% by the year 2003.** To this end, the participating organizations fully endorse the following vision:

Saskatchewan people value physical activity as a fundamental component of being active, healthy and well. Physical activity is a basis for an enriching life and, as an integral part of daily living, is a visible and important expression of Saskatchewan culture.

Strategic Goals

The planning process established three strategic goals. Once achieved, they will make the vision a reality:

1. Promote physical activity through an active living and community relevant approach

This goal supports changing attitudes and beliefs about physical activity through education and communication. It includes sharing up-to-date research and resources. Information should be current, accurate, relevant and in language which is clear and meaningful to the public. Communication, education and information sharing encompasses all forms of communication including one-on-one (e.g. physician to patient, fitness professional to participant), group (e.g. community meetings), agency to agency communications (e.g. networking and partnerships) and mass media campaigns (e.g. advertising, special events, marketing campaigns and program promotion).

2. Establish and implement new and innovative program strategies by working with traditional and non traditional partners with an interest in physical activity

It is essential to improve the quality and quantity of physical activity programs and opportunities. Providing effective programs depends upon capable leadership and adequate programs.

It is vital to build capacity for community program provision by developing skills among leaders, decision-makers and individuals so they can implement strategies. This capacity must be strengthened within organizations and agencies with a history of dealing with physical activity and nurtured among those new to addressing the issue.

Opportunities for physical activity must be available for all levels of activity and ability. Therefore, any existing barriers to participation must be eliminated or alleviated.

Measuring success and tracking progress in becoming a more physically active society is an important component of this framework. Utilizing research expertise within the province will develop methods and tools relevant to Saskatchewan. This will allow program providers to determine their success in encouraging and motivating people to be more physically active. It is also important to share national and international research. All research must be provided in clear and understandable language.

Evaluation contributes to knowledge about factors that will influence the reduction of physical inactivity. Evaluation will provide information about the relative value of programs and policies. Communities must be involved in evaluating initiatives.

3. Raise the importance of physical activity on public agendas

There is a need to create supportive environments that will encourage and support an active lifestyle for all individuals, families and communities in our province. A description of these environments follows.

The choice to be active is influenced by social, economic and geographical factors. Therefore, we must make physical activity opportunities accessible to people regardless of their income or where they live.

Physical Environments Facilities must be accessible and residents need to be made aware of their presence. The public must be encouraged to become their own best resource by using their homes and neighbourhoods, including streets and sidewalks, as active living environments. Recreation opportunities should be available at low or no cost to help eliminate economic barriers.

Social Environments Encouraging positive attitudes toward physical activity and providing social supports for individuals trying to make a lifestyle change is important. Support by family, peer groups, the school and the workplace is recognized as an important factor in adopting and maintaining new behaviour.

Regulatory Environments Governments and agencies at all levels must develop policies, standards and guidelines that support individuals to lead physically active lives. Actions in this area might include policy measures such as municipal bylaws, provincial legislation and regulations, educational curriculum requirements and human resource policy development.

Principles

To achieve these goals and create a physically active Saskatchewan, the government and its many partners from health, recreation, sport, education, justice and social services will be guided by the following principles for change:

Equitable Access
All people of Saskatchewan should have equitable access to opportunities for physical activity, appropriate to their age, gender, language, heritage, ability and socio-economic status.

Choice
A broad range of physical activity choices should be available to meet individual needs and preferences.

Safe Environments
All partners should be committed to providing a safe, supportive and sustainable environment for being physically active. Social and physical environments encourage and support personal choices to lead healthy, active lifestyles.

A Way of Life
Physical activity should play an important role in personal development and lifelong learning. It is a part of daily life including work, education, family life and leisure.

Objectives

The following chart outlines the specific objectives to achieve each of the goals toward ***A Physically Active Saskatchewan! – A Strategy to get Saskatchewan People in Motion.*** A full description of these objectives and action plans follow.

1. ***Promote physical activity through an active living and community relevant approach***	2. ***Establish and implement new and innovative program strategies by working with traditional and non-traditional partners with an interest in physical activity***	3. ***Raise the importance of physical activity on public agendas.***
1.1 Develop public education campaigns that promote physical activity.	2.1 Identify gaps in existing programs relevant to specific populations.	3.1 Promote policies that allow scheduling flexibility for employees who wish to participate in physical activity.
1.2 Provide access to appropriate information, programs and supports to individuals who want to become physically active.	2.2 Build capacity in communities by providing training, resources and technical expertise.	3.2 Lobby at the local, regional and provincial levels for schools to involve students in daily physical activities.
1.3 Analyze and disseminate research findings to support the development and adoption of best practices.	2.3 Reach and involve youth with a range of programs and activities in a variety of settings.	3.3 Promote policies that maximize the use of existing facilities for the purpose physical activity.
1.4 Support coalition development at community and provincial levels.	2.4 Monitor and evaluate activities and outcomes on an ongoing basis	3.4 Minimize and, where possible, eliminate the barriers to participation.

Goal 1: Promote physical activity through an active living and community relevant approach

1.1	Develop public education campaigns that promote physical activity.

Public awareness of the benefits of active living and the numerous resources and programs available to assist people wanting to be physically active must be increased. Messaging should be appropriate for all population demographics and appeal to both the physically active and inactive.

ACTION PLAN

- Utilize existing resources, newsletters and publications.
- Create a speaker's bureau consisting of volunteers and professionals who can speak to the value of active living and physical activity.
- Utilize radio and television to motivate people to be physically active
- Encourage the placement of weekly columns in Saskatchewan newspapers.
- Utilize ***in motion,*** Saskatoon's proven and effective health promotion strategy, as a province wide model for motivating all Saskatchewan people to include regular physical activity in their daily lives

1.2	Provide access to appropriate information, programs and supports to individuals who want to become physically active.

There is a multitude of programs and activities already available to people who wish to be physically active as well as for organizations that want to provide physical activity opportunities. The challenge is to provide ready access to the people and organizations that design, deliver and operate these programs.

ACTION PLAN

- Create an inventory of Saskatchewan agencies and organizations involved in the design, delivery and operation of programs and activities that have a physical activity component.
- Ensure the inventory includes program descriptions and examples and is readily accessible to other programming agencies and the general public.
- Ensure the purpose and program emphasis for organizations with a provincial and/or national scope are compiled and made available to any person or organization requiring them.
- Explore the feasibility of providing electronic access to information through such means as a provincial physical activity website and a toll-free telephone line.
- Ensure access to information on physical activity through promotion of existing information centres like the Resource Centre for Sport, Recreation and Culture; applicable websites; and exemplary sites such as Saskatoon District Health.

1.3	Analyze and disseminate research findings to support the development and adoption of best practices.

A vast array of provincial and national research documentation has been compiled. This research must be made available to those involved in planning and offering physical activity programs to ensure the most advanced training techniques and methods are used.

ACTION PLAN

- Distribute University of Regina research on the impact and usage of parks.
- Distribute University of Saskatchewan data on the Saskatoon ***in motion*** project.
- Research and document why individuals are not active and/or have decreased activity levels. For example, study the drop out rate of children in sport and recreation activity programs.

1.4	Support coalition development at community and provincial levels.

New and creative partnerships and coalitions are needed at both the community and provincial levels in order to serve all Saskatchewan people adequately. The various sectors involved and interested in creating physical activity opportunities must communicate regularly, share and combine resources when necessary and encourage the implementation of new initiatives.

ACTION PLAN

- Re-establish the Saskatchewan Active Living Coalition.
- Involve the Saskatchewan Active Living Coalition in the Metis Nation Legislative Assemblies annually.
- Involve the Saskatchewan Active Living Coalition in the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Sports, Recreation and Culture Commission annually.
- Hold regular conferences or workshops to promote knowledge development and networking in the area of physical activity.
- Include physical activity on the agenda of the proposed Saskatchewan Aboriginal Sports Circle.
- Foster local cooperation in the development of low cost, easily accessible multi-use trails for walking, jogging and cycling.
- Determine a means of developing inter-community cooperation among First Nations for the offering and delivery of recreation/sport programs and services.

Goal 2: Establish and implement new and innovative program strategies by working with traditional and non-traditional partners with an interest in physical activity.

2.1 Identify gaps in existing programs relevant to specific populations.	Physical activity programs must be available to people regardless of their income or where they live. Physical activity opportunities for all individuals, families and communities must be encouraged and supported.

ACTION PLAN

- Develop and implement evidence – based programs involving Metis and First Nations people.
- Develop and implement programs involving youth in smaller northern rural communities.
- Develop and implement programs involving inner-city youth.
- Work with the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan Senate, the FSIN Senate, the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism and other community and provincial seniors' organizations to ensure suitable program opportunities exist for older adults.
- Address the challenge of planning programs suitable for single parent families.
- Conduct a forum to determine why participation in sport and recreation by First Nations people is low and to identify solutions for eliminating this problem.

2.2 Build capacity in communities by providing training, resources and technical expertise.	It is essential to build capacity for providing community based programs. Leaders, decision-makers and individuals must have adequate skills to plan and implement effective physical activity agendas. As well, they must be able to motivate people to maintain, or take up, an active lifestyle.

ACTION PLAN

- Promote the inclusion of sessions on the value of physical activity at conferences and events held by all organizations with an interest in promoting physical activity.
- Ensure the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teachers Education Program (SUNTEP), the Indian Teachers Education Program (ITEP) and the Northern Teachers Education Program (NORTEP) include physical activity training for their students.
- Ensure the education and training for health and other relevant professionals includes physical activity issues.

2.3	Reach and involve youth with a range of programs and activities in a variety of settings

Youth must have support and encouragement to become and remain involved in physical activity. The positive experiences and attitudes gained by our youth will serve as a basis for a healthy, active life. Support by family, peer groups and the school is an important factor in adopting and maintaining a proper level of activity.

ACTION PLAN

- Examine ways of creating physical activity program opportunities through settings such as youth groups, teen wellness centres, urban multipurpose aboriginal youth centres, community centres, school-based programs, youth at risk programs, cultural centres, young offender facilities, etc.
- Educate parents and other caregivers about the importance of physical activity and inform them of physical activity programs in their local communities.
- Involve youth in the decision making process for future physical activities similar to the Youth Empowerment Centres within the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan.
- Implement the community-school concept for First Nations youth in Saskatchewan's southern communities.
- Conduct a First Nations Culture Camp primarily for inactive youth aged 8 to 14 to assess their physical activity needs and desire for involvement, as well as identify barriers to participation.

2.4	Monitor and evaluate activities and outcomes on an ongoing basis.

It is important to measure success and track progress in our attempt to reduce physical inactivity. By utilizing research expertise within Saskatchewan, methods and tools relative to our province will be developed for program providers to determine their successes in encouraging and motivating people to be more physically active.

ACTION PLAN

- Utilize the services of the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) to establish a relevant tracking tool which can be used by community based organizations and individuals involved in providing physical activity programs.
- Use SPHERU to develop an evaluation tool and to gather data from organizations from the community to provincial levels.
- Utilize SPHERU to analyze data and provide regular reports and updates.
- Ensure research data relates to Saskatchewan's demographics, including – children and youth; young adults; families; single parent units; middle-aged and older adults; rural, urban and northern populations; First Nations and Metis people.

Goal 3: Raise the importance of physical activity on public agendas.

3.1	Promote policies that allow scheduling flexibility for employees who wish to participate in physical activity.

A fit workforce increases productivity for employers while increasing self-esteem among employees and generally enriching their lives. Therefore, support by the workplace is an important factor in encouraging people to adopt and maintain active lifestyles.

ACTION PLAN

- Educate all employers about the benefits of having a physically active and fit workforce.
- Encourage employers to support and/or subsidize their employees use of community recreation/fitness centres.
- Provide space for bicycle lock-up and storage.
- Encourage people to use environmentally friendly modes of transportation, which involve physical activity for their travel to and from work.

3.2	Work with education to ensure schools involve students in daily physical activity.

Television, video games and computers have a negative impact on the physical activity level of many young people. Students are considered to be much less active today because of the effect that technological advances have had on the patterns of play. The school system must encourage children and youth to be physically active, providing a lifelong foundation for regular physical activity.

ACTION PLAN

- Ensure the education curriculum includes mandatory information on physical activity along with adequate classroom time.
- Promote the implementation of Quality Daily Physical Education at the local, regional and provincial levels.
- Ensure there are safe and active routes to and from school that encourage walking, rollerblading, skateboarding and cycling by teachers, students and parents.
- Inform schools and student/parent/ teacher organizations of innovative concepts such as *GO FOR GREEN'S* Walking School Bus or the Biking School Bus.

3.3	Promote policies that increase the number of facilities available, or maximize the use of existing facilities, for physical activity purposes.

People must be informed about the availability of appropriate community facilities. As well, the general public should receive information on how to use their homes and neighbourhoods as active living environments.

ACTION PLAN

- Promote policies that allow for more after-hours use of schools.
- Encourage "free use" of recreational facilities for families or youth during designated hours.
- Enhance existing trails and paths through improved maintenance, lighting, and signage.
- Create walking trails and bicycle paths.
- Partner with malls or other non-traditional facilities to make them available for walking during winter months.
- Explore recreational and physical activity opportunities within the community with a view to reducing transportation requirements.

3.4	Minimize and, if possible, eliminate the barriers to participation.

Everyone has the right to have an active lifestyle regardless of her or his locale, physical ability or economic status. Since barriers to participation vary among communities, they must be addressed at the local level. All governments must ensure there are policies, standards and guidelines that support individuals to lead physically active lives.

ACTION PLAN

- Examine the feasibility of establishing a "new initiatives grant" supported by lottery funds that provides assistance for innovative, community based programs aimed at reducing physical inactivity.
- Provide conveniently located clothing and equipment swaps to make activities more affordable for those on limited incomes.
- Provide in-home opportunities for seniors and elders through programs such as the Seniors In-Home Fitness Program offered by the Regina Health District or the In-Home Fitness and Health Program run by the Prince Albert Metis Nation of Saskatchewan affiliate.
- Build media awareness about physical activity in order to influence editorial and advertising policies that are supportive of active living.
- Assist with transportation to facilities or activities in order to facilitate the participation of groups such as seniors or low-income individuals and families.

Moving the Strategy to Action

The ***Action Plan*** provides the basis for planning, implementation and evaluation of collaborative action on physical activity at the local and provincial levels by governments and non-governmental organizations. This *Action Plan* is a good first step towards addressing the physical activity needs of Saskatchewan people and should not be considered an all-inclusive list. The *Action Plan* will need to be evaluated and redesigned periodically to address the ever-changing demand and need for accessible physical activity opportunities for all. While some of these actions have been implemented, the scope and depth varies across the province. Effective physical activity initiatives require integration, coordination and a variety of strategies at the local, regional, district and provincial levels involving a diverse group of organizations.

Communities must be involved in identifying their needs and in planning and implementing appropriate programs to meet those needs. Program evaluation must also be a community responsibility.

Specific detailed plans among partners must ensure that activities are based on best practices, acknowledge the needs of the province and integrate evaluation as an ongoing part of the activity. While each partner will make a contribution to the overall strategy, a co-ordinating mechanism is essential to ensure that collective action is addressing all the priorities within the ***Action Plan***.

To effectively address the Action Plan, a working group consisting of representation from SaskCulture, Saskatchewan Parks & Recreation Association, Sask Sport Inc., Saskatchewan Education, Saskatchewan Health and Saskatchewan Culture, Youth & Recreation will be charged with the responsibility of moving this strategy into action. The provincial government has a role of facilitating the process while the globals must involve their expertise to provide leadership and management of programs and initiatives as required.

Communicating the need for people to be active and encouraging governments, agencies, groups and organizations to take action are two paramount initiatives. The working group must be expedient in their efforts to achieve a physically active Saskatchewan. Therefore, as a first step, the successful Saskatoon marketing and promotion program known as in Motion can serve as a model for implementation throughout the province. Adaptation to this model to ensure success within our several and varied communities will be necessary. The working group should view the provinces' centennial year of 2005 as both a target date for significant progress in getting Saskatchewan people physically active and as a natural focal point for encouraging, implementing and celebrating organizational, community and provincial physical activity initiatives.

Organizations Involved in the Promotion of Physical Activity

There are several Saskatchewan organizations, agencies, groups and government departments with an interest in the promotion and delivery of physical activity programs, services, education and research. Following is a list that identifies these broad interest groups:

Sport and Recreation

- Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation
- SaskCulture Inc.
- Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.
- Sask Sport Inc.
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Sport, Recreation and Culture Commission
- Saskatchewan Metis Sports, Culture, Recreation and Youth
- Community-based recreation / sport organizations
- Municipal Recreation Boards / Departments
- Regional Recreation Associations
- Provincial Recreation Associations
- Zone Sport Councils
- Provincial Sport Governing Bodies

Health

- Saskatchewan Health
- District Health Boards
- Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations
- Community-based Health Care Organizations
- Health Canada
- Metis Addictions Council Saskatchewan Inc.

Education

- Saskatchewan Education
- Saskatchewan Physical Education Association
- Schools, School Boards and School Districts
- Universities and Technical Institutes
- Saskatchewan Urban Native Teachers Education Program
- Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association

Partnership Roles in Implementing a Provincial Strategy

The broad range of identified organizations form a nucleus of potential partnering relationships. Measures to reduce physical inactivity require partners to work together towards common goals and strategic directions. It requires the co-ordination of many strategies at the local and provincial level. This section identifies some of the roles of various partner organizations.

Governments and Agencies

* Provide leadership and resources to support the reduction of physical inactivity.
* Use this document, ***A Physically Active Saskatchewan,*** as a blueprint for action.
* Take a leadership role in coordinating provincial activities.
* Ensure that education and training for health and other relevant professionals includes information on the importance of physical activity.
* Ensure the education and training for teachers and other education professionals includes information on the importance of physical activity.
* Support the Active Living Coalition as a collaborative mechanism among governments, community based organizations, and local provincial groups.
* Provide support for provincial programs.
* Provide public education programs.
* Provide supports for building and maintaining capacity for action.

Provincial Community Based Organizations

* Develop physical activity initiatives that fit with organizational mandates, using the Provincial Strategy as a blueprint for action.
* Deliver provincial programs.
* Provide information, materials and training to community groups to support the reduction of physical inactivity.
* Provide information and materials to private sector organizations.
* Promote the provincial reduction of physical inactivity goals.

District Health Boards

* Provide leadership and resources to support the reduction of inactivity.
* Use the Provincial Strategy as a blueprint for action
* Deliver programs through appropriate health service agencies

Community/Local Groups

* Provide leadership and support in community activities.
* Take the initiative in developing community/municipal policies to reduce physical inactivity.
* Initiate and support strategies to reduce physical inactivity in local businesses and organizations.
* Deliver community programs.
* Provide advocacy support for provincial and regional level initiatives.

Individuals

* Volunteer to work with local coalitions.
* Develop steps to reduce physical inactivity at home, at work and in the community.
* Establish a plan within households that encourages a more active lifestyle for all family members.
* Provide support to business and organizations that are moving to reduce physical inactivity in the workplace.
* Lobby local, provincial and federal elected officials for physical activity resources and to make physical activity issues a priority.

Private Sector

* Promote leadership and role modeling behaviour for implementing policies that support the reduction of physical inactivity, such as active living workplaces.
* Support non-governmental and government organizations by providing access to relevant research, providing services in kind, or grants, to support collaborative projects.
* Promote workplace policies that allow scheduling flexibility for employees who wish to participate in physical activity off-site during lunch or before/after work.

Collaborative Mechanisms

* Partnering organizations should seek to participate in appropriate collaborative mechanisms. These include: Coalition for Active Living, Active Living Coalition for Older Adults, SPRA Fitness Advisory Committee, Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability and other provincial and community coalitions.

Closing Comment

The potential for positively affecting the health of Saskatchewan residents with an effective physical activity strategy is enormous. This paper provides a framework and strategic priorities for action. Agencies at the provincial, regional and local level are encouraged to use this framework to develop and implement action plans, consistent with their organizational mandate, that will contribute to effective action to reduce physical inactivity in Saskatchewan.

A co-operative, intersectoral approach was undertaken to develop this strategy. The provincial government departments of Health, Education, and Culture, Youth and Recreation, Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, Sask Sport Inc., SaskCulture, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's' two universities, and numerous provincial and community sport, recreation, fitness, active living, health, and education organizations collectively developed this document. Many of the strategies will guide agencies, organizations and departments to independently address the issue of physical inactivity. The collective understanding and demonstrated spirit of co-operation demonstrated in completing this document lays the foundation for developing partnerships required to address many of the strategic directions. Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation will ensure facilitation is available to maintain this collaborative approach.

This document serves as a guide to any group, organization or individual who wants Saskatchewan people to be physically active. A healthy, vibrant province begins with **A Physically Active Saskatchewan!**

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Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Physical Activity ... consists of three types of activities needed to keep the body healthy: endurance activities, flexibility activities, and strength activities.
Endurance activities help the heart, lungs and circulatory system stay healthy and give a person more energy.
Flexibility activities help a person to move easily, keeping muscles relaxed and joints mobile.
Strength activities help muscles and bones stay strong, improve posture and help to prevent diseases like osteoporosis.

(Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living)

Active living ... is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life. Active living results in an increased sense of well being and improved quality of life. It is accessible to all, regardless of variations in age, gender, socio-economic status, or ability. Active living promotes the idea that people can make their own decisions about the physical activities that will take place within their daily routines and leisure pursuits. The style of activity, needs, and benefits varies from person to person. Active living, therefore, takes on a slightly different meaning for each Canadian.

(Government of Canada, 1992)

Partnerships ... are co-operative approaches among traditional and non-traditional key players who are involved in initiatives that promote physical activity. Participants and partners share power and decision making.

Active Living Coalition ... is a co-operative partnership of several Saskatchewan agencies, organizations and departments from the health, education, sport and recreation sectors with the purpose of collectively addressing interests and issues of common concern and planning initiatives that mutually benefit all or the majority of the groups within the coalition.

Body Mass Index (BMI) ... Weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in metres. Among middle-aged adults, BMI is strongly correlated with fat mass. The risk of diabetes, high blood pressure or coronary heart disease increases with increasing BMI. Because there is no specific BMI associated with an increased risk of disease, various levels of BMI are used as guidelines for healthy targets. This report uses a BMI of 25 to 27 as excess weight, and a level of BMI >27 as obesity.

(Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada)

Cardiovascular Risk ... Cardiovascular disease is brought on by some combination of risk factors, and many of these are rooted in the Canadian lifestyle. Such things as smoking, physical inactivity, obesity and uncontrolled high blood pressure all add significantly to your risk of developing heart disease or a stroke. Other factors are beyond our control, and include age, family history of heart or stroke and diabetes. Cardiovascular diseases include acute myocardial infarction, ischemic heart disease, valvular heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, arrhythmia, high blood pressure and stroke.

(Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada

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Inquiries about this document can be forwarded to either Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation, or Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association or Sask Sport Inc..

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